

# Assessing Interest, Topic Preferences, and Barriers for Participation in a Virtual Teleconferencing Program (VTP) Connecting Providers and Spanish Speaking Families Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (NDD)

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## INTRODUCTION

- Early diagnosis and treatment has been associated to improve long-term family and developmental outcomes<sup>5,6</sup>
- There are ethnic disparities in ASD treatment and diagnoses: Hispanic children are:
  - diagnosed less and later than non-Hispanic white (NHW) children.
  - more likely to present with severe symptoms at diagnosis
  - less likely to receive evidence-based therapy and specialized medical care after diagnosis than NHWs.<sup>7</sup>
- Data by the California's Department of Developmental Services for Persons with ASD across Demographic and Expenditure Categories has evidenced that racial minorities including Hispanic received the lowest per-person spending across age groups.<sup>4</sup>
- College students with ASD compared to their neurotypical peers are 1.18x, 2.21x, and 1.16x more likely to report worse physical health, mental health, and depression, respectively.<sup>3</sup>
- Clinical providers should continue working on identifying effective strategies to address health disparities through community engagement.

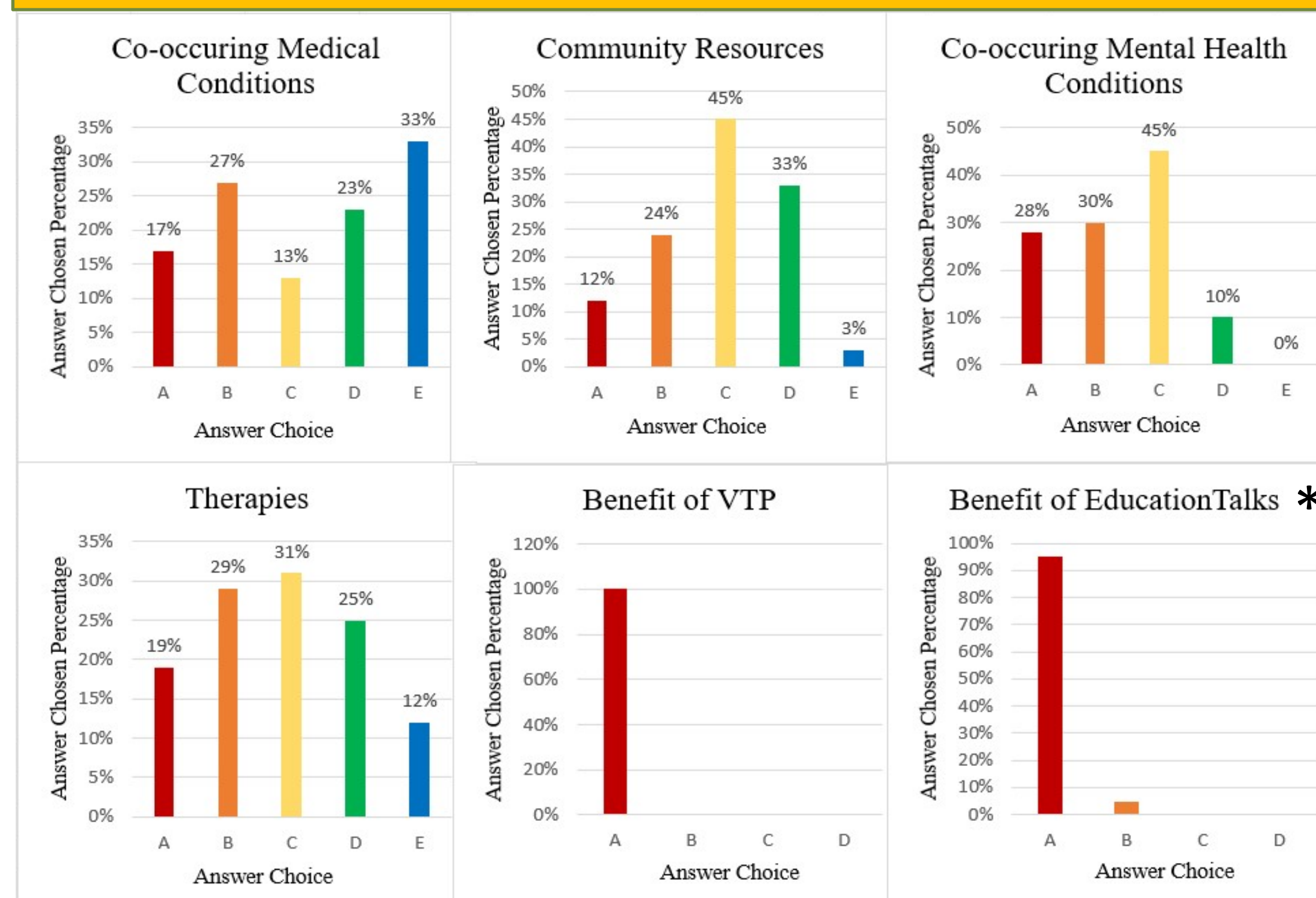
## OBJECTIVE

Identifying interest, topic preferences, and potential barriers in Spanish speaking families living in the Northern California area through their participation on a (VTP) supporting providers caring for children with ASD and NDD.

## METHODS

- Bilingual autism specialist provided a virtual conference to Spanish speaking family members of three different community parent organizations.
- Seven questions were formulated by the presenter exploring knowledge and resources gaps.
  - The questions with answer choices are found here: 
- Participants shared their answer through chat or voice which were then recorded in an excel sheet.
- Percentages of answers chosen were generated for each question from each presentation/discussion session
  - The answer choices with the highest and lowest percentages were recorded.

## RESULTS



\*Results for question 7 are identical

## DISCUSSION

- Participants were most interested in learning more about:
  - feeding problems
  - special education services
  - emotional problems (depression, irritability, and aggression)
  - other therapies (occupational, speech, and physical).
- Participants shared:
  - That a VTP connecting academic experts with local families will be beneficial to families
  - Interest in participating in education talks
  - That hearing how cases are approached clinically would be very beneficial

## CONCLUSIONS

Results are supporting the use of a VTP connecting professionals and families caring for people with ASD. The academic multidisciplinary team should work on the VTP program curriculum development based on these results.

## STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS

- Community participation in program development is key for meaningful improvements in public health.
- Participants were motivated members of community partnership groups and may not reflect the whole community.

## References

